

*Beata Grabowska**

ARE THERE ANY SHORTCOMINGS IN LOGISTICS QUALIFICATIONS IN THE GROUP OF EMPLOYEES 50+?

A b s t r a c t: Rapid changes of the economic conditions seem to drive constant evolution of the logistics concept, thus introducing new ideas of supply chain management (SCM) and / or new management paradigms. These new concepts are reflected by the changes in organisational structures of companies requiring now modified skills and new type of knowledge from logistics employees [Kisperska-Moroń, 2000]. Dynamic changes on the market, the development of information and information technologies contribute to the growing demand for qualified and effective employees of logistics departments who can meet these and other challenges of the modern economy. The sources of employee efficiency, including competencies, have been the subject of interest of management sciences for years [Jarosz-Lewandowska, 2016]. Numerous studies and scientific studies prove that it is the competences of employees that affect the company's ability to achieve market success and are one of the sources of enterprise competitiveness. This makes it important to pay attention to logistic qualifications in the group of people 50+ who are employees of the logistics staff of Polish enterprises.

K e y w o r d s: competences, qualifications, logistic skills, logistic knowledge, employee 50+.

J E L C o d e: J71, M54

INTRODUCTION

If so far logistics did not pay much attention to the problems of personnel management, this tendency has changed in recent years. The shape of logistics process management has changed under the influence of computerization and has clearly defined the need to have above-standard qualifications to work in the environment of fully automated logistics systems. In addition, there has been an increased demand for specialists who have the ability to communicate, the

* Contact information: Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Katowicach, Wydział Zarządzania, Katedra Zarządzania Relacjami Organizacji, ul.1 Maja 50, 40-287 Katowice, email: beata.grabowska.w@gmail.com

ability to make the right decisions, the ability to create professional relationships and are sensitive to the company's culture [Kispierska-Moroń, 2000]. The aim of the work is to draw attention to logistic qualifications in the group of 50+ employees. Additionally, a new image of logistics qualifications was indicated, which is an expression of the evolution of logistics from the traditional approach to the modern approach.

1. LOGISTICS ETYMOLOGY

One of the sources of the term logistics is the Greek word *logistikós*, which means the art of counting and calculating. It presents a man who thinks according to logical, mathematical and philosophical rules. The Latin adjective *logisticus* is also close in meaning, meaning: understandable and rational [Ciesielski, 2004]. The modern understanding of logistics also refers to the French word *logistique*, which comes from military terminology. It means activities covering transport, deployment and supply of troops as well as transport and maintenance of military equipment in combat readiness [Wawrzyniak, 2013]. From the military field, the term logistics has passed into the management literature.

For the purposes of this paper, three consecutive definitions are presented. According to Ficoń [2001], logistics is all activities related to the planning and implementation of the spatial and temporal transformation of goods from the place of production to the place of consumption. In terms of Korzeń [2001], logistics is treated as an integrated system for planning, managing and controlling the structure of material flows and related information and capital flows in order to optimally create and transform values (goods). On the other hand, Kummer and Weber [2001] describe logistics as a concept of process management and the potential for coordinating the implementation of goods flows on the enterprise scale and links between its market partners.

Taking into account the above statements, it should be emphasized that logistics is primarily a specific concern for the customer, permeating all strategic activities and operational enterprises.

2. A NEW PICTURE OF THE NEED FOR LOGISTICS QUALIFICATIONS

In recent years, the scientific community has witnessed qualitative changes in the economic reality. We are talking about the creation of virtual transnational networks of influence, technological innovations, political changes and deregulation, the turbulent development of the service sector, growing consumer expectations, new forms of partnership in the supply chain, globalization of the

economy or the increase in market competitiveness, which has led to great mergers of companies [Płoszajski, 2000; Janczewska, 2017].

Nowadays, it is believed that the future will belong to new organizations based on the work of teams, directly related to customers and suppliers, with a flat structure, flexible, quality-oriented and operating globally [Kisperska-Moroń, 2000].

The growing importance of logistics is closely related to the competences and tasks assigned to it. The expanding area of its impact increases the sphere of responsibility for the proper functioning of the enterprise. Currently, logistics activities cover almost every aspect of the company's operations.

- Marketing - regarding customer service.
- Engineering - concerning the selection of appropriate technical means.
- Economical - aimed at verifying the profitability of specific solutions.
- IT - concerning the selection of tools supporting information and decision-making processes [Bendkowski, Pietrucha-Pacut, 2003, p. 7].

Therefore, logistics should be understood as a system of coordinated activities within the entire enterprise, because it emphasizes the interrelationships between individual elements of the company, which results in forcing managers to think in terms of overall management of the enterprise, not just a part of it. Moreover, changes in economic conditions and an increase in market competitiveness have led to a situation in which companies increasingly focus their attention on horizontal structures that support process management. According to Kisperska-Moroń [2000], "the main feature of changes appearing in today's economic reality is the accumulation of difficulties in the field of management, due to the synergistic effect of the combined effect of increased complexity and increasing variability" [2000, p. 347].

The traditional management style of Polish managers in the logistics industry seems to be conservative compared to the standards and qualifications in force in the world. In logistics, there are fewer and fewer jobs for people with only secondary education, but the possibility of employing university graduates is increasing [ibid., p. 348]. According to Kisperska-Moroń [2000, p. 349], this is because there is a growing demand for specialists who have skills related to interpersonal communication, including the ability to convince in the persuasion of compromises, adaptability, the ability to create professional relationships as well as the ability to unconventional communication. and critical thinking in order to consider the possibilities of a better and better way to perform their tasks, the ability to work in an environment of fully automated logistics systems or the ability to make the right decisions and sensitivity to the company's culture. And he adds that even with such precisely defined qualification requirements, experience cannot be underestimated as one of the basic factors of professional suitability of logistics specialists [ibid.].

In turn, Mangan and Christopher believe that in order to meet the requirements of the modern economic market, it is necessary to have the right team of people and they proposed four types of skills that should characterize this team [quoted in: Sitko, 2016, p. 455]:

- Type I General management skills: strategic management, project management, change management, risk management, finance and accounting, marketing, information technology.
- Type II Problem-solving skills: gathering and communicating information, identifying, analyzing and solving problems.
- Type III Interpersonal skills: leadership, human resource management, interpersonal communication, organization of meetings, negotiations, stress management.
- Type IV Functional logistic skills: law, customs, import / export, inventory management, transport, warehouses, information systems, order fulfillment, purchases.

The above indications present the qualifications that are currently the most desirable on the labor market. I am talking about experience and education. It seems difficult to reach compromises in this respect. As shown by the results of the Social Diagnosis, in 2013-2015 only 9% of people over 25 years old participated in activities related to improving professional qualifications. Among people in training, 38% were aged 25-34, approximately 32% were aged 35-44, 18% were aged 45-54, and only 12% of people over 55 participated in any form of training professional [Czapiński, Panek, 2015]. Such low rates of adult educational activity induce a search for the reasons for this state of affairs.

3. QUALIFICATIONS OF 50+ EMPLOYEES

Poles, like other members of European countries, are aging. In Poland, people over 60 in 2008 accounted for 18% of the entire society, and in 2016 as much as 22% [GUS, 2014]. It is predicted that in 2050 the potential labor force will constitute 56% of the population, and the difference will occur between non-working age populations. This means that the share of the older one (in post-productive age) will be twice as high as that of the younger one (in pre-productive age). This situation implies the need to extend the economic activity of people over 50 [Mendryk, 2016]. Currently, there is a noticeable upward trend in the employment of older people. The percentage of people working in this age group in 2014 was 32.4%, and a year later 33.4% [GUS, 2014].

In connection with the above, it is concluded that the development of qualifications of people over 50 is necessary both from the point of view of the employee - for maintaining employment, and from the point of view of the employer - to ensure the organization of the level of employee competences at a satisfactory level [Mendryk, 2016, p. 214].

Before we move on to discussing the issues, we will first refer to the factors that affect the situation of employees aged 50+ in organizations. According to Mendryk [ibid., p. 216] these are; position in the organizational hierarchy, social status, which is often based on experience and tacit knowledge resources, stereotypes (i.e. beliefs about the characteristics and standards of behavior of members of a given age group) and changes that result from the aging process (e.g. perceptions, needs and motives). When analyzing the above issue, one should refer to the issue of stereotypes, because they also apply to 50+ employees. Stereotypically, older people are perceived as less productive, low-motivated, reluctant to participate in training and taking actions for career development, as well as more resistant and less willing to change than younger employees, and having great difficulties in mastering new technologies [Mendryk 2016, p 217].

Meanwhile, Perek-Biały and Turek [2011] proved that people 50+ show higher competences than people under 35 in the following areas:

- Social competence.
- Loyalty.
- Management skills.
- Reliability.
- Practical knowledge (know-how).
- Ability to communicate your thoughts.
- Share knowledge.
- Commitment to work.

However, their following was assessed very low:

- Flexible operation.
- Creativity.
- Willingness to learn.
- Health and endurance.
- Ability to use new technologies.

On the other hand, Rakowska [2016] focused on identifying the competency potential of managers, listing trends in the industry, management methods and techniques, the use of IT at work, project management methods, and industry expertise. Managers aged 50+ rated their specialist knowledge the highest (87% and 94% respectively). However, in the case of project management (16% and 6% respectively). It is worth mentioning that Rakowska [ibid.] Emphasizes that older managers declare different potential than the younger ones. They believe that they have good interpersonal communication skills, conflict resolution, cooperation with people of all ages and are distinguished by good adaptation skills and mobilization for long-term work [ibid., p. 247].

Moving on to Zaroda-Dąbrowska [2015], attention is drawn to the failure to perceive the potential of employees with many years of work experience. It has been shown that the emphasis is on specialist knowledge, and the competen-

cies in building long-term, trust-based relationships with clients or awareness of change processes in the organization of work are ignored.

On the other hand, Rizutto [2011] showed that the readiness of older employees to develop IT skills is growing and the belief that it is their important element of professional competences. And difficulties in acquiring knowledge in this field are caused by complex operating instructions and English terminology. Another big problem for people aged 50+ is the difficulty of separating important information from information noise. Thus, older employees lack competences in the field of searching, selecting and filtering information.

4. LOGISTICS QUALIFICATIONS IN THE GROUP OF 50+ EMPLOYEES

Man is subject to changes throughout his life. These changes affect all spheres - physical, mental, relational and intellectual. Many of them affect the way and quality of work performed. Changes in somatics or psyche affect the extension of reaction time, lower psychomotor coordination, greater selectivity of perceptions, and extended analysis and synthesis of new facts. In terms of intellectual abilities, there are difficulties in processing information and gaps in the process of formulating thoughts. The time needed to make decisions and the reluctance to make them increases [Richert - Kazimierska, 2013].

Kryńska, Krzyszkowski, Urbaniak and Wiktorowicz [2013] proved that elderly people working in sectors of the national economy, including in transport and storage (9%) they have strengths and weaknesses. Older employees were appreciated for their availability, calmness, low emotionality, reliability, accuracy and great responsibility. On the other hand, they negatively assessed them for their ignorance of foreign languages, inability to use new technologies, low openness to new things, low flexibility, communication skills, creativity, as well as low motivation to learn. Krzyżanowska [2013] expresses a similar wording, believing that people aged 50+ really have resistance to acquiring new knowledge, especially in the field of IT - both when it comes to operating office equipment and specialized software. However, the reasons for this state of affairs are sought in their fear of change. On the other hand, Graniewska [1999] explains that older employees sent to training respond to them as well as younger employees, moreover, thanks to their experience they often achieve better results than younger ones. However, research shows that training older people is not a common practice. In 2010, only 1% of people aged 50 - 74 studied.

Applicable in the world qualification standards and generally accepted canons of logistic processes implementation set very high requirements for candidates. Organizations operating in supply chains need employees who have skills related to good communication, because managers - logistics specialists

are primarily team members. They should have exceptional adaptability, unconventional thinking skills, and the ability to critically consider options in order to seek better and better ways to carry out their tasks. And then, they should also be able to make the right decisions and be sensitive to the company's culture [Kisperska-Moroń, 2000].

In view of the above, all candidates, regardless of age, should constantly improve their qualifications in order to adapt to market requirements on an ongoing basis. This will allow employees to function efficiently in the changing reality. According to Kisperska-Moroń [2000], entrepreneurs, managers and employees must educate themselves in both specialist professions, such as marketing and logistics, but they should also explore general theoretical knowledge, such as strategic management, management accounting, finance, history of economic and organizational thought, etc. In the near future, attractive directions may also turn out to be such fields as sociology, psychology, linguistics, etc. The above psychological and social aspect is particularly important in the management of supply chains, where the so-called management methods over-organizational [ibid., p. 351].

SUMMARY

The rapidly changing reality of the logistics industry and the constantly evolving management paradigm impose high demands on the management staff. Taking into account the above statements, it should be emphasized that the image of an elderly person in the labor market is very diverse. The results of the qualification research among people aged 50+ indicate both their positive and negative aspects. However, it seems that most of them describe people over 50 years of age. useful and even necessary in the labor market.

The opinions presented regarding logistics qualifications prove that people aged 50+ have some of their shortcomings. They mainly concern employees who are in particular in non-specialized positions. The opposite is true for people occupying higher positions in the company's hierarchy.

Nevertheless, regardless of the type of position held by a person over 50 years of age there is a certain reluctance of the management to invest in this group of employees. Courses, industry trainings, seminars, postgraduate studies can shape the entire spectrum of qualifications - including logistics. Thus, the change of attitude in the management staff will result in the improvement of logistics qualifications in the 50+ group. Some changes in this respect are already noticeable, which is a symptom of a very positive trend. However, all activities should be systematic and organized, taking into account three main logistic criteria: time, costs and quality of activities [Dajczak, 2007].

LITERATURE

- Eisenhardt K.M. (1989), Building Theories from Case Study Research, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4, s. 532-550.
- Bendkowski J., Pietrucha-Pacut M. (2003), *Podstawy logistyki w dystrybucji*, Gliwice, Wyd. Politechniki Śląskiej
- Czapiński J., Panek T. (2015), *Diagnoza społeczna 2015, Warunki i jakość życia Polaków. Raport*, Warszawa 2014, s. 153 i nast., [dok. elektr.] dostęp online: http://www.diagnoza.com/pliki/raporty/Diagnoza_raport_2015.pdf [odczyt:03.04.2020].
- Ciesielski M. (2004), *Podstawy wiedzy o logistyce*, AE Poznań.
- Dajczak K. (2007), Aspekt logistyczny selekcji pracowników, *Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Nauk Ekonomicznych Politechniki Koszalińskiej*, 11, s.75–87.
- Ficoń K. (2001), *Procesy logistyczne w przedsiębiorstwie*, Impuls Plus Consulting, Gdynia.
- Graniewska D. (1999), *Warunki życia emerytów i rencistów w Polsce i w krajach zachodnich: uwarunkowania, problemy, tendencje*, Warszawa, Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych.
- GUS (2014), *Prognoza ludności na lata 2014–2050*, [dok. elektr.], dostęp online: <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosc-na-lata-2014-2050-opracowana-2014-r-,1,5.html>, [odczyt: 04.04.2020].
- Jarosz-Lewandowska D. (2016), *Kompetencje polskiej kadry logistycznej w świetle wyników badań*, *Zeszyty Naukowe, Organizacja i Zarządzanie/Politechnika Śląska*.
- Janczewska D. (2017), *Zarządzanie logistycznym systemem zaopatrzenia przedsiębiorstwa MŚP – wybrane problemy*, [w:] Lichtarski J. (red.), *Nauka dla praktyki gospodarczej i samorządowej - aplikacyjne walory teorii i instrumentów zarządzania, Przedsiębiorczość i Zarządzania t. 3*, Łódź - Warszawa
- Kisperska-Moroń D. (2000), *Zarządzanie logistyczne: nowoczesne wzorce kształcenia w uczelniach ekonomicznych i szkołach zarządzania*, *Polski Kongres Logistyczny „Logistics 2000 – Wyjść naprzeciw logistycznym wyzwaniom XXI wieku”*, Poznań.
- Korzeń Z. (2001), *Ekologistyka*, ILM, Poznań.
- Krzyżanowska Ł. (2013) *Homo sovieticus czy doświadczony pracownik? - opinie pracodawców o pracownikach w wieku 50+, w: Acta universitatis lodziensis folia oeconomica 291*,
- Kryńska E., Krzyszowski J., Urbaniak B., Wiktorowicz J. (2013), *Diagnoza obecnej sytuacji kobiet i mężczyzn 50+ na rynku pracy w Polsce - raport końcowy*, Łódź.
- Kummer S., Weber J. (2001), *Logistyka*, PWE, Warszawa.
- Mendryk I. (2016), *Uwarunkowania doskonalenia kompetencji pracowników 50+, Wyniki badań*, *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej, Organizacja i zarządzanie*, Gliwice, 97.
- Perek - Białas J, Turek K. (2011), *Starszy Pracownik z punktu widzenia pracodawcy*, [w:] *Ku socjologii starości*, Wydawnictwo AGH, s.131-151.
- Płozajski P. (2000), *Zdążyć przed rewolucją*, *Życie Gospodarcze*, nr 13, s. 32.
- Rakowska A. (2016), *Potencjał Kompetencyjny kadry kierowniczej innowacyjnych przedsiębiorstw w perspektywie zarządzania różnorodnością zasobów ludzkich - wyniki badań*, *Zeszyty naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej nr 97*, s. 455
- Richert - Kazimierska A. (2013), *Przedsiębiorcy pokolenia baby boomers wobec innowacyjności, w Przedsiębiorczość - droga do innowacyjnej gospodarki*, Uniwersytet Szczeciński, zeszyty naukowe 795, *Ekonomiczne problemy usług 109*, Szczecin.
- Rizutto T.E. (2011), *Age and technology innovation in the workplace: Does work context matter?*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27.
- Sitko Z. (2016), *Zarządzanie logistyką w małych przedsiębiorstwach*, *Zeszyty naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej*, nr 99, s. 455
- Wawrzyniak K. (2013), *Istota, rodzaje i funkcje logistyki* [w:] *Kozłowski R., Sikorski A. (red.), Podstawowe zagadnienia współczesnej logistyki*, Oficyna a Wolters Kluwer business, s.13.

Zaroda-Dąbrowska A. (2015), Zarządzanie różnorodnością jako wyzwanie menedżerów. Wykorzystanie potencjału starszych pracowników – case study, [w:] Makowiec M. (red.), Wybrane problemy w kształtowaniu zachowań organizacyjnych, Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie, 37–44.

